

§ 143B-426.53. Industrial Commission determination.

(a) The Commission shall determine whether a claimant is eligible for compensation as a qualified recipient under this Part. The Commission shall have all powers and authority granted under Article 31 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes with regard to claims filed pursuant to this Part.

(b) A deputy commissioner shall be assigned by the Commission to make initial determinations of eligibility for compensation under this Part. The deputy commissioner shall review the claim and supporting documentation submitted on behalf of a claimant and shall make a determination of eligibility. In any case where the claimant was a competent adult when asexualized or sterilized, the burden is on the claimant to rebut the presumption that the claimant gave informed consent. If the claim is not approved, the deputy commissioner shall set forth in writing the reasons for the disapproval and notify the claimant.

(c) A claimant whose claim is not approved under subsection (b) of this section may submit to the Commission additional documentation in support of the individual's claim and request a redetermination by the deputy commissioner.

(d) A claimant whose claim is not approved under subsection (b) or (c) of this section shall have the right to request a hearing before the deputy commissioner. The hearing shall be conducted in accordance with rules of the Commission. For claimants who are residents of this State, at the request of the claimant, the hearing shall be held in the county of residence of the claimant. For claimants who are not residents of this State, the hearing shall be held in Wake County or at a location of mutual convenience as determined by the deputy commissioner. The claimant shall have the right to be represented, including the right to be represented by counsel, present evidence, and call witnesses. The deputy commissioner who hears the claim shall issue a written decision of eligibility which shall be sent to the claimant.

(e) Upon the issuance of a decision by the deputy commissioner under subsection (d) of this section, the claimant may file notice of appeal with the Commission within 30 days of the date notice of the deputy commissioner's decision is given. Such appeal shall be heard by the Commission, sitting as the full Commission, on the basis of the record in the matter and upon oral argument. The full Commission may amend, set aside, or strike out the decision of the deputy commissioner and may issue its own findings of fact, conclusions of law, and decision. The Commission shall notify all parties concerned in writing of its decision.

(f) A claimant may appeal the decision of the full Commission to the Court of Appeals within 30 days of the date notice of the decision of the full Commission is given. Appeals under this section shall be in accordance with the procedures set forth in G.S. 143-293 and G.S. 143-294.

(g) If at any stage of the proceedings the claimant is determined to be a qualified recipient, the Commission shall give notice to the claimant and to the Office of Justice for Sterilization Victims and to the Office of State Controller. The Office of State Controller shall make payment of compensation to the qualified recipient or a trust specified under G.S. 143B-426.51(b).

(h) Decisions and determinations by the Commission favorable to the claimant shall be final and not subject to appeal by the State.

(i) Costs under this section shall be taxed to the State. (2013-360, s. 6.18(a); 2014-100, ss. 6.13(c), (e).)